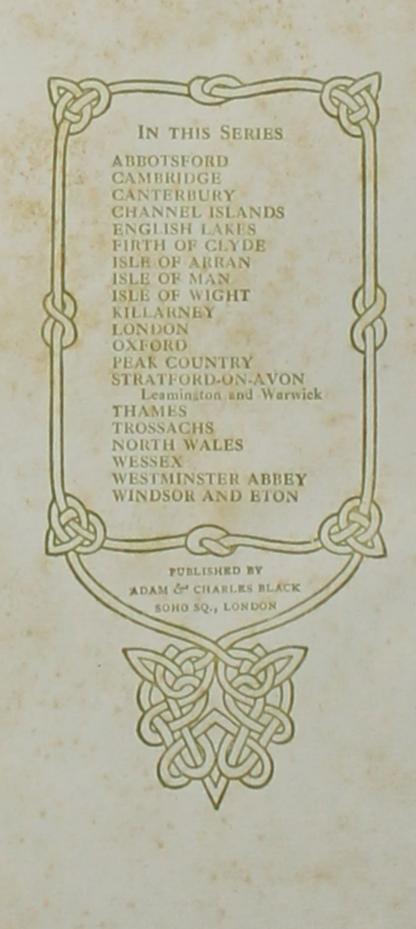


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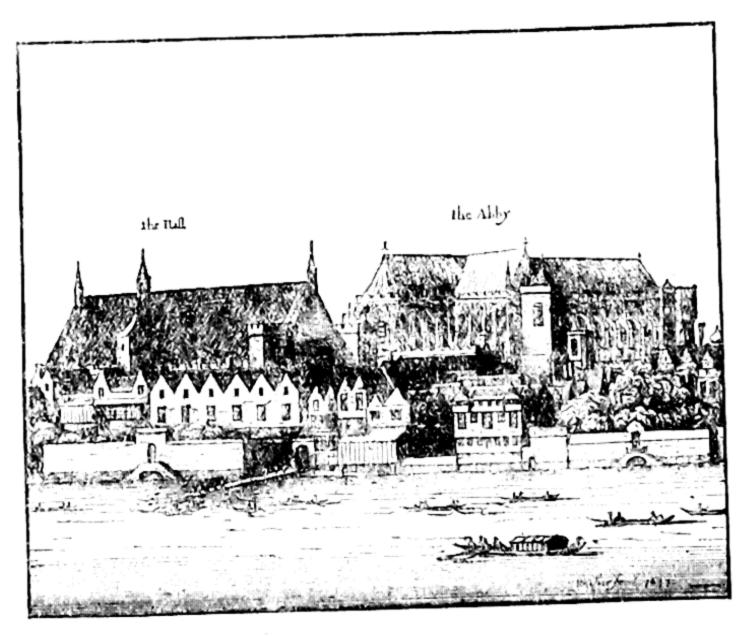
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BY JOHN FULLEYLOVE, R.I.

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WESTMINSTER ABBEY AND HALL.

From an engraving by Hollar.

WESTMINSTER ABBEY

I.

WESTMINSTER ABBEY it is certain, if anything is certain, will always remain in the eyes of Englishmen one of the most prominent, if not the most prominent, of all their great churches, or even of all their great public buildings. Not the largest of its kind, for St. Albans and Winchester are considerably longer, and York is bigger on plan in all dimensions; not by any means the stateliest either in bulk or situation, for Lincoln and Ely, on their sovereign hills, are infinitely nobler in outline, and placed to more splendid advantage; not even thoroughly English in the character of its architecture, for certain features of this are essentially French— Westminster is yet, in a sense, the eternal emblem of the national life and of national unity. Certainly France has nothing to compare with it in this character of popular shrine. Notre Dame, like St. Paul's, is the cathedral of a city, but hardly the St. Denis, though its tombs temple of a nation.

have been rifled at the Revolution, was once perhaps equally a burial-place of Princes; but those whose bodies were brought here for interment went to Rheims to be crowned as Kings. The Panthéon again, to a large extent, is the national Valhalla of France, admission to whose portals is deemed the final recognition of those who have merited well of their country. But these are scattered and isolated buildings, as far apart as Paris and Champagne; whilst Westminster unites within narrow compass the crowning-place of Kings, to some extent their grave, and the mausoleum of patriotic greatness. the first of these particulars its record is almost unbroken from the coronation of Harold - every English King since the Confessor has been crowned in the Confessor's church, with the single exception of Edward V., who died unanointed-perhaps was murdered in the Tower—a mere helpless lad of thirteen. Henry III., it is true, who was afterwards to accomplish so much for the Abbey, was crowned in the first instance at Gloucester; but the ceremony was repeated four years later at Westminster. One can only guess why the Conqueror chose Westminster Abbey for the ceremony, and not, as one might have looked for, the cathedral church of St. Paul. Probably the burial of the Confessor in the church of his own building had invested the spot with symbolic sanctity; certain it is that Harold was crowned here; and certain it is that here, standing above the very

grave of his penultimate predecessor, William assumed his ambiguous crown. The precedent of royal burial set by Edward himself was followed by his successors with less zeal: the first English Kings of the new dynasty were also, with the exception of William Rufus, Dukes of Normandy, and Normandy claimed them in death. William himself was interred in his own church of St. Etienne at Caen, where his funeral was interrupted by two weirdly dramatic scenes; Rufus lies at Winchester; Henry II. and Richard at Fontevrault (though the latter's heart is at Rouen); John is at rest at Worcester.

Only in fact with Henry III., whom we may call with respect to Westminster-what the Exchequer Leiger of Chertsey calls Abbot John de Rutherwyke— "quasi dicti loci secundus fundator," does the Abbey become again the burial-place of Kings. Even during that monarch's lifetime, three of his children had found rest within its walls. Here, too, according to one account, had been previously deposited the heart of his nephew, Henry, who was murdered apparently in the very act of receiving the Communion in the cathedral church of Viterbo in 1271. Simon de Montfort, who had rebelled against the King, was defeated and slain by the King's son, Edward, at the battle of Evesham in 1265. whole story, like that of the assassination of the Red Comyn by Robert Bruce in the church of the Grey Friars, at Dumfries, is a singular commentary on the lawlessness of the times. Cardinals were assembled at Viterbo in 1271 in order to select a successor to Pope Clement V., and Simon's son, Guy, was present in the city in his capacity of Vicar-General of Tuscany. The temptation to avenge the death of his father was too great, and Henry was stabbed at the altar. "This sacrilegious act threw Viterbo into confusion, but Montfort had many supporters, one of whom asked him what he had done. 'I have taken my revenge,' said he. 'But your father's body was trailed!' At this reproach, De Montfort instantly re-entered the church, walked straight to the altar, and, seizing Henry's body by the hair, dragged it through the aisle, and left it, still bleeding, in the open street." Even in the darkness of the thirteenth century, such a deed filled Europe with horror; and Dante places Guy, in a place apart, in the stream of boiling blood that is the punishment of the violent:

> "Mostrocci un'ombra dall'un canto sola, Dicendo: 'Colui fesse in grembo a Dio Lo cor che insul Tamigi ancor si cola.'"

Dante, however, it will be noticed, lends no colour to the tradition that the heart was interred at Westminster; and there is, in fact, another, though perhaps less probable, account that it was placed in a pillar over London Bridge. The precedent set by Henry was studiously followed, though not without exceptions, by his successors till the time o

George II.: even the murdered body of Richard II., if murdered, indeed, he was-and this is at least as probable as the other story, told by Walsingham, that he died "by voluntarie pining of himselfe"—was brought here finally from Langley in 1413, and deposited by Henry V. under a magnificent monument. The murdered Edward II., on the contrary, rests on the north side of the high-altar at Gloucester; whilst Henry VIII. seems first to have set the fashion, afterwards followed by Charles I. and by all succeeding monarchs since George II., of royal burial at Windsor. James II., of course, who died in exile, is buried, as an exile, in foreign soil. It is strange, however, that no King of United Britain is commemorated in the Abbey by a monument; the last English sovereign so honoured is Elizabeth; whilst, still more strangely, the last royal tomb ever built within its precincts is that of a Queen of Scotland. The very grave of James I. had come to be forgotten till its re-discovery in 1868. And not only was no monument erected to the memory of these later monarchs, but not even a line of inscription, as Mr. Loftie points out, was carved to indicate their place of rest. "Dean Stanley, to whom the royal sepulchres owe so much, placed their names as nearly as possible over the place where each one was buried." The student of English country churches often comes across some brass-obviously laid down in the lifetime of the person buried below-in which

the blank for the date of death has never been filled in, by the carelessness of an executor, or the ingratitude of an heir; but even this pathetic neglect is here outdone in the case of these tombs of Kings whose names were not even "written in water."

Of Westminster, so great in this triple aspect, the origins are lost in obscurity: like other great national institutions—like the Universities, for instance, of Oxford and Cambridge - it grew in silence and unobserved. That the monastery, or church, was founded by a fabulous Sebert, King of East Anglia, who died in 616, is hardly more likely than that University College was founded by Alfred the Great, or London by Brute of Troy! Sebert's tomb, it is true, is still shown in the south ambulatory, but it dates from the beginning of the fourteenth century; and its existence no more proves the existence of the King, than the shrine of St. Amphibalus, in the aisle of St. Albans, proves the existence of St. Amphibalus himself. Possibly both monarch and saint once lived, or possibly both are myths. Widmore conjectured that the house had its origin between 730 and 740, and Mr. Loftie thinks that this is probably Certainly it is not mentioned by the Venerable Bede, who died in 736. Bede, however, was essentially a Northumbrian writer, and perhaps more familiar with North than South. Anyhow, the first definite reference to Westminster Abbey is in a charter of Offa, King of Mercia, who reigned between

756 and 796. More precisely than this, unhappily, it does not seem possible to date it, for, like most early charters, it bears no year. Offa was a Prince of religious mind, who also founded the great neighbouring abbey of St. Albans; and in this charter to Westminster he bestows on the house certain property at Aldenham in Hertfordshire which afterwards proved a great bone of contention between the two great monasteries. The gift is also remarkable for first using the name of "Uuestmunster" (it was originally called Thorney), and for referring to the site as a locus terribilis. Westminster, in later days, was possibly so called in distinction from the Cistercian house of St. Mary Graces, which was also known as Eastminster; but here it seems used to distinguish St. Paul's. "Minster," of course, in early times was constantly applied, as at York and Lincoln, to colleges of secular canons as well as to establishments of monks, so that no difficulty is involved in supposing it to have been used with reference to the diocesan church. Terribilis is sometimes thought to have reference to the savageness, or desolation, of the site, it being rather a favourite habit with early monkish writers, and possibly with their patrons, to expatiate on the terrors of monastic neighbourhoods. Thus Fountains Abbey is said to have been built in a spot that was "better adapted for the lair of wild beasts than fitted for the dwelling-place of man." The sanctity of those who endured such

hardships was illuminated by the picture of their sufferings. It is much more likely, however, as suggested by Professor Middleton, that terribilis here has reference to the holiness of the place, venerable already as the scene of pious works, and not without allusion to what Jacob says of Bethel (Gen. xxviii. 17): "Quam terribilis est locus iste!..."
—"How dreadful is this place! This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."

There is thus no doubt that a monastery of some sort was in existence at Westminster probably from at least as early as the first half of the eighth century; but this, at best, is a shadowy foundation of which we have little record. The real foundation of the Westminster we know was its refoundation by Edward the Confessor, in accordance with one of those strange spiritual bargains that seem literally to teem in the Middle Ages. The Confessor, who particularly affected the cult of St. Peter, had made a vow before his accession to the throne to visit his tomb at Rome; and this he actually proposed to accomplish after his coronation. His courtiers, however, succeeded in dissuading him in view of the perils of the journey, and the Pope released him from his vow on the easy condition that he should found, or re-establish, a monastery in honour of the Apostle thus slighted. Almost exactly similar in its broader aspects is the story of the foundation of the Cistercian Meaux Abbey, in Holderness, as told in the Chronicon

de Melsa. William de Gros, Earl of Albemarle, had made a vow to go to the Holy Land, but age and infirmity had hitherto prevented him. Troubled at this in conscience, he was finally absolved on condition that he should erect a new monastery. Edward, in accordance with the terms of his release, re-established the old Benedictine house at Westminster, and the society thus constituted continued without interruption till its destruction at the great Dissolution. Edward, who had passed many years of his exile, during the lifetime of his predecessors on the throne, in Normandy, had a strong partiality for the people of that duchy; already, in 1044, he had bestowed the bishopric of London on a Norman, Robert of Jumièges; and now, in 1050, it was to Normandy that he naturally looked to find an architect to build his new church. Architecturally, at any rate, if not patriotically, his choice of a builder was right. The contemporary English school of Romanesque was distinctly backward as compared with its sister in Normandy. Three hundred years previously Alcuin had been able in rapturous hexameters to praise the erection (it was probably the Minster) of a great new church at York—

[&]quot;Ast nova Basilicæ miræ structura diebus Præsulis hujus erat jam cæpta, peracta, sacrata"

[—]but it is doubtful at least if a critic of discernment in the eleventh century, who had once seen Bernay

Abbey, could ever have afterwards brought himself to praise the church of a Saxon Westminster. Westminster was thus the first great Norman church ever erected on English soil-the forerunner of those many stately piles, such as Winchester, Ely, and Norwich, that were presently to render England more conspicuous for its gorgeous Norman architecture than was even Normandy itself. The only drawing that remains to us of the great new church at Westminster, which the Confessor, however, did not live to see finished, is that contained in the Bayeux Tapestry in the picture of the funeral of its founder. Perhaps this is only a fancy sketch, but at any rate it is right in representing the church as cruciform in plan. It is not easy to decide whether the arches shown along the side of the nave are meant to be an external wall arcade, or a view of the inside, the aisle being supposed to be removed. Very early Norman buildings undoubtedly had sometimes external wall areades of the kind in question, as may be seen, for example, at Selby. At any rate, the church has a bold, central tower, a feature that it has ever since lacked. Slightly more valuable is the description of the completed church that is contained in a French metrical MS. of about 1245, and may well have been composed just before Henry III. began his extensive reconstruction. From this we learn one, or two, particulars that help us to picture to ourselves the Romanesque Westminster:

"Now he laid the foundations of the church With large square blocks of grey stone. Its foundations are deep; The front towards the east he makes round; The stones are very strong and hard. In the centre rises a tower, And two at the western front."

This might also serve for a description—triplet of towers and eastern apse—of St. Etienne, or Notre Dame, at Caen.

"The church built by Edward," says Mr. Loftie, "was destined to stand for almost exactly two centuries. It was consecrated in 1065 and its successor in 1269." Henry III., out of respect for his monkish predecessor, determined to rebuild the whole church. It was, perhaps, as Mr. Loftie suggests, a strange way to honour the dead King by thus wholly destroying his handiwork; though the result is so splendid that we unite in its applause, though deprecating the spirit that raised it. Henry, indeed, only lived to complete the east part of the church, as far as the fifth bay of the structural nave —according to some authorities not nearly so far to the west, though in this case the doubtful portion was built at least as early as the reign of Edward I. Anyhow, for a hundred years, or more, the new work stopped short at the fifth bay, though it does not appear that the rest of the Norman nave was destroyed till about 1388. Westminster Abbey must thus, for more than a century, have remained, like Le Mans, or Bordeaux, Cathedral at the present day, a splendid, incongruous patchwork. When at last the completion of the nave was seriously taken in hand, probably towards the close of the fourteenth and the beginning of the fifteenth century, the original plan of Henry was scrupulously adhered to, with some modification of detail. The seven west bays of Westminster, like (to some extent) the nave of Beverley Minster, are thus an instance of so-called assimilation on a very extensive scale. The builders of the new portion of the nave did not, like the fourteenth-century rebuilders of Archbishop Roger's nave at York, work on a quite independent plan of their own, with little reference to what was already built. The leading outlines of the seven west bays at Westminster are the same as those of the earlier choir and presbytery; but the masons, whether from carelessness or from preference, made departures in points of detail. Let anybody compare the base of one of the piers in the presbytery with the base of one towards the west end of the nave, and the difference will be seen at a glance. The great church as it stands is thus essentially informed with a single spirit from end to end—the spirit of thirteenth-century architecture at its best and most classical moment. It is important, however, to remark—and the coincidence is extraordinary that this second great Westminster, like its Norman predecessor, was again largely an importation from France. In the chapter that follows we shall try to

point this out more in detail, and to illustrate the adherence of Westminster to the models of Amiens and Rheims. For the moment it is sufficient, by way of summary and anticipation, to postulate that Westminster is either (like the choir of William of Sens at Canterbury) the expression of a French brain, modified by English conditions and influences, or, less probably, the work of an English architect who had learnt much of his craft in France. Westminster, for this reason, holds an unique position in the evolution of English art, though a position of great ambiguity; for it is hard to know whether rather to assent to that school who see in it only a glorious, but isolated, phenomenon, whose presence in nowise affected the main stream of development of English architecture, or to that school who see in it such a parting of the ways that English churches, in their judgment, may be roughly divided into "before Westminster Abbey" and "after." This must be left to the learned; but at least one English church that seems directly to have been influenced by Westminster, and was possibly even built by the same masons (as Skelton Church, in Yorkshire, was possibly built by the masons who had worked on the new transepts at York), may shortly be mentioned here. High above the Thames, within twenty miles of London, in a Kentish region that was once perhaps beautiful, but is now a misty agglomeration of chalk-pits and lime-works, is the

exquisite church of Stone. That this is a true daughter of Westminster Abbey is the judgment of the late Mr. Street.

The subsequent mutations of the fabric of Westminster Abbey are a record of decadence and failure. Henry VII.'s Chapel, superficially so amazing, proves consideration merely a tour de force, which exhibits neither (to adopt the nomenclature of Mr. Ruskin) the Lamp of Beauty nor the Lamp of Truth. Sad that its architectural puerilities should so have enslaved the mind of Barry that he took them for a model (exempli pessimi) when designing his new Houses of Parliament—an edifice so magnificent in structure and outline-so destitute of beautiful detail. The better part of Westminsterand this is luckily the bulk of it-may well, on the contrary, have influenced Street in planning the new Law Courts in the Strand—a building, for some odd reason, almost unanimously condemned, and yet surely unrivalled for its exquisite detail, and not without vast merits of design. As for the two west towers, which were left incomplete by the medieval builders, but were finished in the eighteenth century, as some say, by Wren, but more probably by his pupils, Hawksmoor or James, even Mr. Loftie, who, when dealing with the now replaced front of the north transept, is so tender to the pseudo-Gothic work of Wren, is yet constrained to admit that they "were built when Wren had reached extreme old age, and are not worthy of the designer of St. Mary Aldermary, or St. Alban, Wood Street. In fact, they are generally attributed to Hawksmoor, one of Wren's pupils." How successful Hawksmoor could be in classical work is seen in the south façade of Queen's College at Oxford; how atrocious in Gothic, in the pastry-cook towers of the north quadrangle at All Souls', in the same University. The west towers at the Abbey, in fact, raise in rather acute form an eternal problem in architecture and archæology, or, perhaps, rather a problem in the reconciliation of the two. As they stand, they are more or less an eyesore -the Abbey would almost look better without them, as we see, indeed, in the engraving of Hollar published in 1654. Moreover, they are not the expression of an art that, though feeble, is at any rate vital and true; they are mere anachronistic experiments in a style that was then already dead. On the other hand, these towers, though admittedly ugly, are connected with great names, and already possess in themselves association and age. On the whole, there would be more justification for replacing them—had we anything worthy to offer in their place —than there was for the reckless destruction of the Arundel Steeple at Canterbury. Yet a man might be easily forgiven for shrinking from a responsibility so great. The problem is the same as was lately raised in the case of the pseudo-Gothic glass at Winchester College.

The Benedictine Monastery, we have said, with the rest of its kind, survived till the Dissolution. perished then, of course, but by gentle transformation, instead of by violent disruption. Its Abbot was not hanged, like some of the hapless northern Abbots-like him of Jervaulx, whose name is still seen scratched on the wall of the Beauchamp Tower, in the Tower of London, or him of Whalley, in Lancashire; on the contrary a college of secular canons was quietly substituted for a house of "buzzing monks," and the last Abbot became the first Dean. Westminster, at the same time, was made the seat of a Bishop, whose see apparently embraced most of Middlesex except Fulham, where the Bishop of London had his Palace, and, of course, the City of London itself. Thurlow was placed on the episcopal throne, and given for Palace the old Abbot's House —the first Bishop of Westminster and also the last! The monastery was restored for a time under Mary, who put Abbot Feckenham at the head of the house. Of the seventy original monks who had gone out into the world at the Suppression only seventeen could be found. Feckenham, however, got fourteen more, but the aftermath of the Abbey was short. Mr. Loftie conjectures that the "feelings of Cranmer and Day by the open grave of Edward VI. were repeated in the minds of Bishop White and Abbot Feckenham" as they stood by the grave of Mary. Feckenham, however, took his seat once in the House of Lords as a Mitred Abbot in the first Parliament of Elizabeth. The secular college was now revived, and exists at the present day. It is interesting as one of the only two of its kind—St. George's Chapel, at Windsor, is the other—that remain in the country apart from the seat of a bishopric. Colleges of secular canons—that is, of ordinary priests, in distinction from regular canons, that is, priests, such as Augustinian and Præmonstratensian canons, who lived according to a regula, or rule—were common in medieval England—the county of Durham alone had five. Westminster Abbey is also a peculiar—exempt, that is, from the jurisdiction of the diocesan Bishop. The Dean and Chapter within their own domains are absolute lords and masters.

II.

It can hardly be claimed for Westminster Abbey that it makes an effective appearance as seen from outside. The genius of a medieval cathedral seems emphatically to demand a medieval environment. It is not necessary that the church should be set on a hill, as Ely is set, or Durham, or Laon, to assert its proper majesty above the rest of the city: Canterbury, though placed quite in the bottom of a valley, towers above the old streets and houses that surround it, and the same is true of Beauvais or York. But it is at least necessary that a Gothic church should

not be crushed into insignificance by neighbouring structures that overwhelm it in bulk or height, as Westminster is crushed by the huge Victoria Tower of the new Houses of Parliament on the one hand, and by the ugly dome of the new Wesleyan Church House on the other. And, apart even from mere questions of bulk and height, a medieval church among the classical, or pseudo-classical, streets of a modern city has always a rather lost and uneasy appearance: Notre Dame, among the stately quays and thoroughfares of Haussmannized Paris, seems actually to cry out for the lost setting of the ancient Cité—

"And Villon threads his scraps of wicked rhyme In Gothic Paris of the Middle Time"—

for a Parvise in front, surrounded by low, half-timbered houses, and for narrow, winding lanes to frame tantalizing peeps of its lofty apse and high flying buttresses. Wren's western towers again—we may style them his, though the attribution is more than doubtful—are from every point of view a most irritating feature, and seem actually to accentuate, like the two west towers at Beverley—though these at least are beautiful—the painful lack of a central tower. Wren, indeed, proposed to supply this last deficiency, and a sketch of his proposal is extant. The great central spire of Lichfield Cathedral, which had been ruined during the siege in the Civil War, when

"fanatic Brooke
The fair cathedral stormed and took,"

was actually rebuilt by Bishop Hackett after the Restoration, and is in many respects quite a satisfactory piece of work. It was obviously, in fact, far less easy for a seventeenth-century architect to go wrong in designing a Gothic spire than in designing a brace of Gothic west towers; and one could almost wish that this plan of Sir Christopher's had been put into execution at Westminster-it would certainly have given to the building a balance and unity that at present it painfully lacks. It is true that Mr. Bond is confident that Henry III.'s church, like its great French models, "never had a central tower, nor was ever meant to have one." "The piers of the Westminster crossing are much more slender than those at Salisbury;" and even at Salisbury, we know, the subsequent piling up of spire on tower has proved a somewhat dangerous experiment. Wren, however, was a good engineer; and it is likely that the builder of the dome of St. Paul's, and of the flying spire (if one may so call it) of St. Dunstan's-in-the-East, would not lightly have courted disaster.

There is another asserted impediment to the proper appreciation of the exterior of the Abbey that is sometimes objected to less reasonably. This is the church of St. Margaret, which jostles it closely on the north, and undoubtedly prevents it from being well

seen as a whole from this aspect. It is true that the tendency of medieval England was to surround at least one side of its great churches with open spaces, or closes; and the effect of this, as at Lincoln, or Salisbury, is often of remarkable beauty. French cathedrals, on the contrary, as at Soissons, or Amiens, are often closely hemmed round by houses; and this too has its own proper charm. Nothing, however, could possibly justify—what has sometimes been proposed—the destruction, or removal, of St. Margaret's. Historically the church has a distinct significance, for it represents a phase in the development of the Abbey. In most monastic churches the ritual nave of the building-which is not always, or perhaps even usually, co-extensive with the structural nave-served primarily as the church of the parish; and this dual arrangement still curiously survives, in a sense, in the great abbey church of St. Albans (and apparently nowhere else in England), the parish still having its altar there at the east end of the nave, whilst the old monastic church has now become the cathedral of the modern diocese. The monks at Westminster, however, found the common plan inconvenient, and accordingly built St. Margaret's, at some date prior to 1140, to serve for parochial purposes. The present church, of course, is much later rebuilding, being mostly of the fifteenth century, and a magnificent example (except for the slight projection of the chancel beyond the aisles) of that fully developed town plan of which St. Andrew's Undershaft is another good example in the Metropolis and St. Michael's-le-Belfry at York. St. Margaret's, moreover, for many centuries was the official chapel of the House of Commons; and though they have ceased since 1858 to attend it in a body (as they used to do four times a year), yet the Rector of St. Margaret's, on one occasion at least, has been appointed their chaplain.

Externally, no doubt, the best feature or the murch is the front of the north transept, which seems always to have been the principal entrance. In most great churches, no doubt, the west front was made the chief façade, though not by any means always the principal way of ingress: in quite a number, for instance, as at Canterbury, Gloucester, Durham, Beverley, Worcester, and Salisbury, the principal doorway to the church was a porch at the side of the One wishes that the architect of Henry's abbey church—whether Anglicized Frenchman or Gallicized Englishman - had left us the original design (if such were ever made) for his west front. The plan for the west front of Cologne Cathedral was thus drawn from the beginning (and may still be seen in a chapel), though the bulk of it was realized in actual stone and mortar only during the course of last century. Westminster, apparently, had no such good luck; and nothing could be worse than the existing west façade—nothing more rigidly

gaunt and unlovely-ugly is hardly too hard a word. Hawksmoor's towers, indeed-if his, indeed, they be-are enough to spoil anything, with their incongruous classical cornices above the staring clock spaces; but what comes below, though medieval, will hardly be thought much better, with its ugly gridiron window—as bad as those at Winchester and Norwich — and its hard rectilinear panelling. English builders, as compared with French, were seldom successful with their west fronts, and seem, indeed, hardly to have bestowed much thought on them: York, Lichfield, Beverley, and Wells are possibly the best (for Peterborough, though splendid, is a mere magnified porch), but what are these compared with Rheims and Amiens? The north transept, on the contrary, has a really beautiful façade, though much is mere modern composition. original front had become ruinous in the seventeenth century, and Wren was employed to renew it. I do not know if we have any view of the façade before he took it in hand, but we know that he announced his intention "to restore it to its proper shape as first intended." That this was done to the best of his ability is clear from a careful drawing that was published by Charles Middleton at almost the beginning of the nineteenth century: it is obvious from this at once that the great leading features of the design-the triple doorways; the line of recessed windows immediately above them; the

open arcade above this; the great rose; the blind window tracery of the gable; the main disposition of the great pinnacles and flying buttresses—that all are in spirit essentially medieval. A careful comparison of this drawing with a photograph of the existing front, as recast by Scott and Pearson, shows that all these features have again been preserved: Wren's spurious Gothic details have been replaced by more accurate and scholarly reproductions, but there can hardly be a doubt that this façade, in the main lines of its composition, still stands as it stood from the beginning. I do not know why Mr. Loftie is so tender to the seventeenthcentury work that has here been destroyed. It can hardly have laid more claim to exact reproduction of original detail than that which has now in its turn replaced it; nor does it seem right to say of it that "it was very interesting, as the latest attempt to carry on the Gothic tradition in English architecture." That is a phrase that might justly be used of such late work at Oxford as the chapel of Wadham College, or the quadrangles of University and Oriel, or possibly of the grand staircase of the Hall at Christ Church: it can only very doubtfully be said at any time of the Gothic of Sir Christopher Wren, who probably only worked in these medieval forms more or less under compulsion, and never under the stress of a genuine, lingering tradition. This is perhaps true of all his pseudo-Gothic work—the

tower of St. Michael's, Cornhill, is an echo of that of Magdalen College, and that of St. Dunstan's-in-the-East of St. Nicholas, at Newcastle; whilst in the case of this transept front at Westminster, it was admittedly, on his own showing, an attempt to recover by restoration, not to create by new design. The three great doorways at the bottom are essentially French in character, and are paralleled by those at St. Albans; though, curiously enough, these last are also largely nineteenth-century workmanship, never having been finished till taken in hand by the late Lord Grimthorpe, though conceived as early as the thirteenth century, and commenced by Abbot John de Cella.

This may perhaps be a convenient point, before entering the Abbey, to explain at a little greater length why Westminster, though built on English soil, is claimed, like Cologne, to be a church of essentially French origin. The case of French versus English is summarized by Mr. Bond in a special chapter in his interesting volume. Some of the points are rather technical, and here it must be sufficient to indicate the chief. Briefly, then, Westminster is French in the planning of its chancel, which ends in a central apse surrounded by an ambulatory and ring of chapels. It is true that this disposition is found in England in Norman times in a few great churches, such as Norwich, Gloucester, and Tewkesbury; but normally it had disappeared

from this country by the close of the twelfth century. The chapels at Westminster, as pointed out by Mr. Moore, are a curious admixture of those at Amiens and Rheims, though the influence of the latter is perhaps predominant. The easternmost of the ring of five has, of course, been destroyed, and is now represented by Henry VII.'s Chapel. Westminster, again, is French in the height of its roof in proportion to its span, and is likewise French in its absolute height. This is about 102 feet from the pavement to the crown of the vault—small, indeed, when compared with the 1531 feet of Beauvais, the 140 feet of Amiens, or the 148 feet of Cologne, but vast when compared with the highest stone vault in England, at Salisbury, which is only 84 feet. French, too, are the great roses at the ends of the transept, though these occur again at Lincoln and York, and formerly at the east end of old St. Paul's. The Westminster roses, however, are set, quite uniquely in England, in square bottom frames, the spandrel being pierced in a way that is quite common in France. Lastly, the north façade, with "its cavernous porches," reminds us of Amiens or Bourges. Mr. Bond is of opinion that the architect was a Frenchman, who never perhaps even set eyes on the church, which was executed almost wholly by English masons. "It is utterly impossible," he says, "that Westminster can have been designed by anybody but one who was born

and lived in the great French school of the He de France and Champagne, who practised in that school of design only, and who knew nothing else. No English architect, whether he went to France on a short or on a lengthened visit to study French Gothic on the spot, could have designed Westminster."

Westminster is almost always entered by the great north doorway, and externally, as we have seen, this is by far the best approach. There are advantages, however, in entering at the west, if the west door happens to be open: thus the whole body of the main church, from the west doorway to the apse, breaks on the vision in a single long vista; and thus the eye is spared the initial irritation of the enormous assemblage of monuments in the north transept, which makes that part of the church look almost like a statuary's studio. Probably no cathedral interior in England is at once so majestic and so beautiful as Westminster thus seen. Other great churches, such as Lichfield and Exeter, have greater charm of colour, and are lovelier in a more feminine style; York is more masculine and majestic; but Westminster presents just such a blending of two complementary kinds of beauty as approaches architectural perfection. Those who find Amiens so lofty as quite to dwarf its real length, and can hardly look up to the giddy vaults of Beauvais without getting a crick in their necks, not less than those

who find Lincoln a tunnel, will possibly consider Westminster one of the most perfectly proportioned churches in the world. The dark brown hue of the stone, moreover, due to long centuries of that "corroding and piercing smoke of the sea-coals from the city," of which Sir Christopher Wren found so much to complain, if it has not the delicate complexion of the red sandstone of Chester and Carlisle, is at any rate more agreeable to the eye than the dull drab of the magnesian limestone of the interior of York. If the visitor look back as he advances up the church, the effect is marred, it is true, by the stiff fifteenth-century window that so dreadfully disfigures the end of the nave, just as its sister in ugliness at Beverley disfigures the end of the choir. Its only feature of redemption, in fact, is its seventeenth-century glass, which, though little medieval in character, is very far from being wholly bad. Gazing eastward, however, this annoyance is not felt, and the eye passes freely from point to point, resting with unruffled satisfaction on triforium, or clerestory, or soaring vault, and always subtly conscious, whilst rejoicing in the part, of the splendour and perfection of the whole. Wordsworth has some lines on Westminster Abbey, but not in his best style, and I do not care to recall them; but what he said so finely of King's College Chapel reads equally well of Westminster Abbey, if we substitute Henry III. (who was certainly not a "royal saint") for

Henry VI., and a scanty band of "monks" for a scanty band of "scholars":

"Tax not the royal Saint with vain expense,
With ill-matched aims the Architect who planned—
Albeit labouring for a scanty band
Of white-robed Scholars only—this immense
And glorious Work of fine intelligence!
Give all thou canst; high Heaven rejects the lore
Of nicely-calculated less or more;
So deemed the man who fashioned for the sense
These lofty pillars, spread that branching roof
Self-poised, and scooped into ten thousand cells,
Where light and shade repose, where music dwells
Lingering—and wandering on as loth to die;
Like thoughts whose very sweetness yieldeth proof
That they were born for immortality."

The visitor when he has sat for a time, and realized the beauty of proportion and general design, will be ready for closer study of detail. He will then admire the vast clerestory windows (their size, and the absence of a passage in front of them, is another French feature); the exceedingly lovely triforium that runs through the whole church, and has richly diapered spandrels; the two great roses of the transept, the north of which glows and scintillates (except in the centre) with glass that is post-medieval, but unexpectedly good of its date; the remnants of exquisite fourteenth-century glass that still luckily survive in the clerestory windows of the apse; and the splendid grouping, beneath the lofty and acutely pointed arches, of the three great tombs (two of them so splendid in

themselves) on the north of the presbytery. Afterwards, with an opera-glass, he should try to study the famous "censing angels" in the transepts-perhaps the most wonderful bits of detail in the whole of this "The artist," says Mr. Loftie, wonderful church. "who placed these figures in the north and south transepts must have had a genius which brought him nearer to the great Greek sculptors of the Periclean period than any who have lived since their time . . . perhaps if one had to select the best public statue in England, it would be impossible to overlook the angel on the north transept on the western side. He appears to be literally hovering in the air, or, ratherfor this the sculptor has most marvellously expressed -he is supposed to be swinging his censer in the presence of his Lord, and to be floating in a sea of light, which forces him to bow his head and avert his face from its dazzling effulgence."

So far, in praising the interior of this magnificent church, we have been writing of the main fabric of the Abbey. Henry VII.'s Chapel, which is, of course, a late addition, ultimately taking the place of the original Lady Chapel of Henry III.—the central of the ring of five—stands by itself, in a category apart, whether for praise or blame. If we choose to be uncritical, we may praise it easily enough: it was certainly meant to be very splendid, and very splendid, in a sense, it is—so splendid, indeed, that on first entering it (I do not know that anyone particularly praises its exterior)

the æsthetic senses for the moment are dazed, and intelligent appreciation is lost in wonder. The roof, with the lace-like texture of its general surface, and with its marvellous concave-conical pendants, is the most wonderful thing of its kind in the world, but perhaps rather too reminiscent of the showy skill of the conjuror. These pendants that hang from the roof, like stalactites from the top of a cavern, are clever enough, but surely quite meaningless, and sin against one of the first of all canons of art. Ornament may be applied to beautify structure, but should never usurp its place. These pendants can hardly be justified as merely decorating the vault, as its profiling decorates a rib, or as the capital of a vaulting shaft may be sculptured. These pendants, on the contrary, are structural excrescences, exhibiting their own ornament of endless fussy panelling. It is only because they possess a certain beauty of their own, that one tolerates their presence for a moment: make them as ugly as one sometimes sees them in the Debased Gothic work of France, and their true nature will no longer deceive us. The main transverse ribs of the vault have actually a kind of hanging, fretted ornament of Saracenic richness, such as one finds on the soffits of the arcade arches in the church of St. Jacques, at Liège, but nowhere else, that I recollect, in England. Nothing can be more severe than the pronouncement on this chapel of an able American writer, Mr. C. H. Moore. "Another

phase of the Perpendicular style," he writes, "is embodied in Henry VII.'s Chapel of Westminster, begun in 1502. It is hard to speak in measured terms of such a composition. It appears to me an instance of medieval jugglery, in which every noble quality of architecture is sacrificed to constructive pedantry and ornamental excess, without any fine quality of ornament. Its fan vaulting manifests great science in far-fetched construction designed to trick the eye, and great skill in the mechanical art of stonecutting; but of rational composition it has none." Henry VII.'s Chapel, in fact, belongs to a group of three sister buildings-St. George's, at Windsor, is the third—of which King's Chapel, at Cambridge, is by far the most successful, but all of which belong to a period of architectural decadence. It will be pleaded that the building is beautiful, if we do not look too closely, or subject it to the test of eclectic canons of art. Of course the building is beautiful—in a sense, amazingly beautiful: no one will deny it who has seen the misty London atmosphere transfigure the marvellous fretwork of its roof till it looks like a web of gossamer. Gray, who was a Londoner by birth, may well have had it in mind when he wrote in his Elegy:

"Where through the long-drawn aisle and fretted vault The pealing anthem swells the note of praise."

It is also interesting as a great mechanical tour de force, and as a land-mark in architectural evolution.

Also it is fair to remember that some competent critics hold a totally different view. Mr. Bond calls the roof "the masterpiece of English masonry, the wonder of foreign lands;" and elsewhere, "the most wonderful work of masonry ever put together by the hand of man." This is not, perhaps, in itself to differ from Mr. Moore, but it is to view the same truth with enthusiasm instead of with cold recognition. Moreover, in another passage he goes far beyond mere delight in mechanical ingenuity, and seems positively to revel in the building as a whole. this Royal Chapel is seen another great artistic achievement. High as is the place of the quire and nave of the Abbey in Anglo-French architecture, so high in our own art stands this triumph of Robert Vertue, architect. It is far in advance of anything of contemporary date in England, or France, or Italy, or Spain. It shows us Gothic architecture not sinking into senile decay, as some have idly taught, but bursting forth, Phœnix-like, into new life, instinct with the freshness, originality, and inventiveness of youth; searching out paths which none had adventured before, subjecting the ancient problems to a new analysis, and solving them in a fashion equally surprising and delightful. This Royal Chapel in deed and truth is, as Leland well styled it, an 'Orbis Miraculum." Such, and so diverse, are the critical judgments occasioned by this world-famed chapel.

III.

WE have already warned the reader that in entering the Abbey by the great north door he will be disagreeably reminded of a sculptor's studio, and this, in fact, is to put our finger on the principal blot of the whole Abbey. It is not merely that in order to accommodate these monuments the beautiful wall arcade that formerly ran along the walls beneath the windows of the aisles has been ruthlessly hidden, or too frequently hacked away; it is not merely that a number of the people here commemorated ought never to have found honour within these walls; it is not even that a vast amount—perhaps in the nave and transepts the bulk—of this huge display of statuary is appallingly feeble, or even vulgar, in itself. The crux of the whole position is simply the over-whelming quantity of it, and the fact that, apart from its own intrinsic merits, whether good or bad, it is actually so unsuited to the genius of the church. suppose the statue of the late Mr. Gladstone, erected by the vote of the House of Commons, equally with that of his great rival, Lord Beaconsfield—the two are near together, like the graves of Fox and Pitt:

"Drop upon Fox's grave the tear,
"Twill trickle to his rival's bier"—

are really good bits of sculpture, but surely they would look better amid the classical surroundings of

St. Paul's! So, too, with the three great Cannings, erect on their circular marble pedestals—how odd they look, with a background of lancet window, at the base of a thirteenth-century pier. And if these, which are comparatively modest, are offensive, what are we to say of marble piles such as those of Chatham and Mansfield, which almost contrive to block whole arches, or of the colossal figure of James Watt, in the Chapel of St. Paul, which justly symbolizes (I think someone has made the remark before), by its complete disregard for the amenities around it, the triumph of steam over beauty, and the return of the Iron Age? Proposals have been made without end towards the solution of the problem thus raised. Some would like to banish from the church every monument erected after a particular date, or raised in a particular style. Others would erect a special "Campo Santo" in the precincts of the Abbey, or possibly attached to it, which might accommodate future monuments, or even receive some of those already built. Others would weed out the tombs of those who ought never to have been buried in the church. The evil, in short, is admitted, though the remedy may be doubtful or hard. The monuments in the transepts and nave, and to some extent in other parts of the building, more or less spoil the church.

On the other hand, Westminster Abbey not only contains tombs (and these not a few) that are entirely

in harmony with the architecture of the church and actually lend it grace, such as those of Queen Eleanor and Aylmer de Valence, but it is possible to trace in it the whole progress of English sculpture from medieval times to the present day. The historical interest, again, of these monuments cannot be equalled elsewhere at any other church in England, or possibly at any other church in the world. Dull of imagination must be the man who can stand unmoved in the Confessor's Chapel, girt round by a complete ring of England's greatest Kings. Here is Henry V., the hero of Agincourt, and "conqueror"as the curious glass portrait at Queen's College, at Oxford, describes him-"conqueror of his enemies and of himself" (hostium victor et sui). That triumph over himself-over the roystering boon companion of Falstaff and Poins (it is not easy to separate history from fiction)—is curiously commemorated, as some suppose, by one of the badges above his chantry chapel. These consist of a swan and antelope, both collared, and both attached to a blazing beacon, this latter being held to symbolize how the Prince's virtues, obscured in the "foolish noise" of his youth, afterwards shone out as a "light and guide to his people to follow him in all virtue and honour." Here again is the "ruthless King," who

> "Rode roughshod to a stained renown O'er Wallace and Llewellyn dead";

and here, too, is his almost greater grandson, the

victor of Crécy, Poitiers, and Halidon Hill, who held to ransom a King of Scotland and a King of France. But to me, I confess, the most touching incident in connection with this chapel-in connection with all Westminster Abbey—is the burial here of three pairs of royal lovers. Here are Edward III. Philippa of Hainault head by feet, and Richard II. and Anne of Bohemia side by side: only Edward Longshanks and Eleanor of Castille, for some odd reason, are separated by the length of the chapel. Lovely and pleasant in their lives, those two at least should never have been divided in death. Anne of Bohemia died in 1394, and her husband was inconsolable. He caused the erection of this splendid monument, where husband and wife lie side by side —hand was formerly linked in hand till some unimaginative vandal stole them! Only Henry Tudor Elizabeth of York, of all other English monarchs, thus lie together in the Abbey in brass or marble. How different from those royal tombs at Caen, where the Conqueror and Matilda sleep far apart, each in the great church of their own devising. It was not, however, immediately after his murder or death at Pontefract that Richard was brought here to rejoin his consort: he was buried at first in the church of the Black Friars, at King's Langley in Hertfordshire; and it was only the repentance, or superstitious scruple, of Henry V. that tardily reunited the royal lovers in 1413. Shakespeare "EDWARDUS PRIMUS, MALLEUS SCOTORUM" 41 appropriately makes Henry recall this good deed in his prayer on the eve of Agincourt:

"I Richard's body have interred new."

There is a portrait of the King—one of the very earliest paintings in England—hung in front of the tapestry on the south side of the Presbytery.

Of all these royal tombs in the Chapel of the Confessor that of Henry V., if we reckon in his chantry, is by far the most elaborate, though the actual recumbent wooden effigy, stripped as it is now of its silver head and of the silver plates that once adorned it, is merely a piteous wreck of former splendour. That of Edward I., on the contrary, is probably the plainest in the Abbey. Abbot Feckenham, who adorned many of the royal tombs in the days of Mary with what he thought appropriate inscriptions, has painted on this the enigmatic motto: "Edwardus Primus, malleus Scotorum, hic est. Pactum serva." Edward, true enough, was a "hammer of the Scots," and the words are not inappropriate on the grave of the fierce old King whose dying bequest to his son—who was to lose the field at Bannockburn—was to carry his bones in front of the English army till Scotland should be finally subdued. One cannot but think, in contrast, of that other grave, dug only the other day at Windsor, on which one might write with equal truth: "Here is Edward the Peacemaker." Feckenham's "Pactum serva" is

a puzzle: one would like to think it referred to the vindictive obligation; but Feckenham, unless inspired with the spirit of the archæologist, or unless he was merely reviving an old inscription, can hardly be thought to have meant it in this sense. Very different from this plain sarcophagus is the monument of Eleanor of Castille, the gilt bronze figure on which is considered by Professor Lethaby as probably the best recumbent effigy in Europe. This exquisite tomb, in fact, with its splendid iron grille on the side towards the ambulatory, may be reckoned a fitting climax to the long series of beautiful crosses-alas! only three survive-by which Edward sought to commemorate the long passage of the funeral procession of the much-loved Queen from Harby, in Nottinghamshire, to London. The monument of Henry III., on the same side of the chapel, was also erected by Edward to the memory of his father, but is totally different in character. It is strange, indeed, that the builder of the Abbey, who sent to France for the plans of his great church, should thus himself be commemorated in death by a tomb of Italian work-This, still richly glowing with red porphyry and green serpentine, though much of its gold mosaic has gone, reminds us of the marble veneer of Giotto's tower at Florence, and illustrates the immense gulf at the close of the thirteenth century between Italian and English architecture. One does not realize for a moment, till one thinks of their foreign origin, that

this and the bulk of the shrine of the Confessor which, thanks to their tradition of lingering Romanesque, seem actually to anticipate the Renaissance in their ornament—are actually older than the tomb of Eleanor, or of Edward III. and Philippa of Hainault. Philippa's monument has been stripped of most of its "weepers," as the statuettes are called that decorated its sides; but a series of these remains on the south side of that of Edward, formed by his six children. Delightfully graceful are the miniature bronze figures of Joan of the Tower, and of Mary, Duchess of Brittany. Here too is the Black Prince, looking more like an elderly man than the chivalrous stripling who led the charge at Crécy. He, like his father, has conventionalized hair and beard, and is clothed in civilian costume. Katharine of Franceafter vicissitudes as troublous as those of the body of James IV. of Scotland—is laid to rest at length near the chantry of her husband. Her body for years was unburied, and the vergers used to show it for a fee. Pepys, writing in 1669, states "here we did see, by particular favour, the body of Queen Katherine of Valois; and I had the upper part of her body in my hands, and I did kiss her mouth; reflecting upon it that I did kiss a queen, and that it was my birthday, thirty-six years old, that I did kiss a queen!" One prefers to think of Browning's lines-

> "Mouldering her lute and books among, As when a queen long dead was young"—

rather than of this "ghastly birthday treat" of the ingenious Mr. Pepys.

There is yet, however, one object of interest in the centre of the chapel that cannot be overlooked. This is the shrine of the Confessor himself, in whose honour the church was rebuilt. This is of double interest, alike as a very curious example (like its builder's tomb) of Italian workmanship of the thirteenth century, and as the only shrine in England (save one, according to Mr. Bond, of St. White, or Candida, at Whitchurch Canonicorum, in Dorset) that has never been broken open and rifled. Most pilgrimage shrines, of course, were violated at the Reformation, when St. Thomas' at Canterbury, perhaps the chief of all, was levelled to the dust, and its occupant strangely summoned to answer a charge of High Treason! The actual structures, however, or relics of them, may still be seen here and thereof the patronal saint at St. David's; of St. Thomas Cantelupe, at Hereford; of St. Werburgh, at Chester; and of St. Alban and St. Amphibalus, at St. Albans Cathedral. Possibly even Henry, though he did not spare the saint, yet hesitated to lay brutal hands on the grave of a predecessor on the throne. Roman Catholics still come to the church on King Edward's day to kneel before the shrine of the Confessor. Further to the west, against the back of the great reredos of the Sanctuary, the frieze of which is sculptured with a series of incidents taken from the

life of the saint, is placed the Coronation Chair, enshrining the very ancient stone from Scone. Wherever this is kept, according to the old prophecy, the Scottish race shall reign:

"Ni fallat fatum, Scoti, quocumque locatum Invenient lapidem, regnare tenentur ibidem."

This forecast is supposed to have been justified by the union of the two kingdoms under James; though, even so, there was an interval of more than three hundred years since first the stone was deposited here by Edward I., in 1296.

The visitor, before quitting the Confessor's Chapel, should place himself at its extreme east point, near the doorway of the chantry of Henry V. Hence is commanded what will perhaps be thought the most beautiful view in the whole church. The hideous west window is here hidden, and the long vault of the nave is seen retreating into the dim distance till it is hidden behind the reredos of the High Altar, whilst to right and left are beautiful glimpses—best seen by slightly shifting our position — into the transepts and side chapels, and, almost immediately above, into the lantern above the crossing. What monuments are seen are mostly of great, though subordinate, beauty, as well as of unrivalled historical interest.

From the Chapel of the Confessor it is barely a step into Henry VII.'s Chapel, which at West-

minster may be held to rank second as the burialplace of Kings. What struck one most in the former structure was the terror and love of Kings-the face with which they confronted the world—the face with which they told a woman that they loved her. What strikes one here is the pathos of Kings—the tale of their tragedy and pitiable end. The complicity of Mary, Queen of Scots, in the murder of Darnley has certainly never been proved; possibly it is quite untrue; it is simply a point in question. Yet here, in the south aisle, is Darnley himself, kneeling by the side of the tomb of his mother, the unhappy Countess of Lennox, and only needing, as it were, to stretch out a marble hand to touch the stately monument of the Queen who was once his wife. Mary herself was brought here from Peterborough in 1612, just twenty-five years after her execution

> "When a thousand witcheries lay Felled with one stroke, at Fotheringay."

Her son was determined that "the like honour might be extant of her that had been done to his dear sister, the late Queen Elizabeth." James had, in fact, built the latter's tomb—she had murdered his mother, but the English revered her memory; but we can hardly blame him if Mary's monument, though both are much alike, is markedly the more magnificent of the two. The recumbent effigies on both these tombs are splendid examples

of the statuary's art, and both are intended for portraits. Elizabeth is buried in the vault below, and her coffin actually rests on that of her predecessor. Mary of England has no monument the second of her dynasty thus to be neglected in the Abbey; but James caused to be inscribed on the west end of Elizabeth's tomb the extraordinary words of reconciliation that seem to link together in the grave two sisters whose lives had been severed from their birth by such antipathies: "Regno consortes et urna, hic obdormimus Elizabetha et Maria sorores, in spe resurrectionis." As Dean Stanley says: "The sisters are at one: the daughter of Catherine of Aragon, and the daughter of Anne Boleyn rest in peace at last." Moreover, there is a breadth of view in the last few words that seems strange in the commencement of the seventeenth century. One is reminded of the beautiful text that is inscribed in this same chapel on Stanley's own monument: "I see that all things come to an end: but Thy Commandment is exceeding broad."

But we have not yet concluded with Darnley and Mary our tale of "sad stories of the death of Kings." At the extreme east end of the north aisle, in a classical sarcophagus that was erected by Charles II. from the designs of Sir Christopher Wren, are enshrined the bones that were discovered in 1674 near the former staircase to the chapel in the White Tower, and are supposed to be those of Edward V.

and his luckless younger brother. At the end of the main body of the chapel, again, below the east window, is the spot from which the body of Oliver Cromwell—a King de facto if not de jure—was torn from the grave by feebly vindictive hands in 1660, and thrown into a pit in the churchyard. Posterity, quite lately, has honoured the great Protector with a fine statue within a stone's throw of the desecrated grave, though not within the walls of the Abbey.

The finest tomb in Henry VII.'s Chapel—as well as the most interesting as a landmark in the evolution of sepulchral art—is undoubtedly that of the founder himself, and of Elizabeth of York, his wife. The bronze-gilt recumbent effigies of husband and wife, together with that of Margaret Beaufort, the King's mother, in the adjoining south aisle, are the very finest examples of their kind of the new realistic art of the Renaissance, and are due to the hand of the Florentine Torrigiano, who had learnt his craft in the studio of Michael Angelo himself. These products of the new learning should be carefully contrasted with the exquisite medieval figure of Eleanor of Castille, though unhappily authorities cannot agree as to whether this last is conventionalized, or also an attempt after portraiture. No one can look at the splendid face of Henry-powerful, shrewd, but not unkindly—at the eyebrows, the sharply chiselled nose, or the strong lines round the sides of the mouth -without realizing the new spirit that had come over European sculpture. Very splendid, too, are the old woman's hands of Margaret Beaufort—not a wrinkle or vein is omitted. Unhappily, the actual monument of Henry is much concealed from view by the magnificent iron grille with which Torrigiano has surrounded it. This, too, makes it difficult properly to appreciate the exquisite medallions that adorn the sides of the table-tomb itself—surely among the most priceless artistic treasures of the Renaissance, not in West minster alone, but in England. Luckily, views may be got of these at the stall at the north entrance to the Abbey.

The misericordes of the lower range of stalls on each side are generally, or always, kept turned up, so that the visitor can examine their quaint imaginings at leisure. The Abbey has also a great rarity in its four wooden sedilia in the main Sanctuary, but the choir stalls are modern, so that the woodwork in the Chapel of Henry VII. is of more than common interest and value. At present, I confess, the effect of the interior is rendered just a trifle gaudy by the rather crude new banners of the Knights of the Bath, but this is a fault that time, assisted by London smoke, may be relied on quickly to remedy. At the north-east corner are two pagan-looking monuments. The later of these bears the famous "agnostic epithet," composed by the Duke of Buckinghamshire (died 1721) himself, which, whatever opinion we may hold as to the correctness of its

divinity, must surely be reckoned on its literary merits at once the most pathetic and dignified in a church that is curiously undistinguished in this direction:

"Dubius, sed non Improbus, vixi.
Incertus morior, non Perturbatus;
Humanum est Nescire et Errare.
[Christum adveneror]. Deo confido
Omnipotenti Benevolentissimo;
Ens Entium miserere mei."

Even John Newton — that bitter tyrant in things spiritual of the gentle soul of Cowper—is said to have admired the last line ("Essence of All Being, pity me"). The words in brackets, "Christum Adveneror," do not actually appear on the marble. Dean Atterbury refused them admission on the ground that "adveneror" was used only of the worship of the saints. The adjoining monument to George Villiers (assassinated by Felton at Portsmouth in 1628) is a pompous stack of masonry, but remarkable for the sweetness and grace of the group of marble children who kneel in alto-relievo above the head of the tomb.

It is impossible, of course, in the limits of a sketch such as this to do anything like justice to so vast a mass of monuments as is comprised within the walls of the Abbey. All that is here possible is to try to indicate very briefly some of the best and worst in a desultory way. Generally speaking, the best of the monuments (including, I think, all that are

medieval) are to be found in the ambulatory and chapels, whilst the majority of the worst, though the chapels have a sprinkling, are plastered along the sides of the aisles of the nave and transepts. The loveliest tombs in the whole church are the three splendid monuments-respectively, and in order of date, to Aveline, Countess of Lancaster (d. c. 1273), to Edmund Crouchback (d. 1296), and to Aylmer de Valence (d. 1324)—that form together so strikingly picturesque a group under the arches on the north of the Presbytery. The two last (for that of Aveline is less conspicuous) represent the very apogee of English medieval sepulchral art, and are probably, with the exception of the splendid tomb of Eleanor Percy in Beverley Minster (which had never, however, a recumbent effigy), the very finest examples of their class in England. Each, in the pediment of its canopy, has a sculptured medallion of the deceased knight on horseback-a curious anticipation in the Middle Time of the Renaissance art (partly perhaps of Jean Cousin, partly perhaps of Goujon) that sets Louis de Brezé thus astride on the top of his own monument (whilst his cadaver lies below) in the Lady Chapel at Rouen, or sends the Duke of Wellington riding into St. Paul's on the top of his own tomb (as Milman, it is alleged, declared that the Duke should never ride whilst he was Dean). One of the most interesting chapels, from our present point of view, is that of St. Edmund, on

the south of the ambulatory. Everything here is subtly harmonious, though there is plenty of real Medievalism is represented by the incongruity. really fine tombs of William de Valence (d. 1296), with its exquisite portions of Limoges enamelling, of John of Eltham (d. 1337), and of Sir Bernard Brocas (d. 1396), as well as by the brasses—among the best and largest in the church-of Alianore de Bohun (d. 1399), and Archbishop Waldebey (d. 1397) of York. The Italian Renaissance, which we saw to such advantage in Henry VII.'s Chapel, appears again here, not unworthily, in the monument of the Duchess of Suffolk (d. 1559); whilst the German Renaissance, which was presently to supplant its Italian rival on English soil, much to the loss of English art, here puts in perhaps one of its earliest appearances in the tomb of Lord John Russell (d. 1584), though it does not yet exhibit the characteristic Jacobean pinnacles that appear in such profusion in the adjoining Chapel of St. Nicholas, on the monument of the Duchess of Somerset (d. 1587). The seated figure of Francis Holles (d. 1622) is remarkable as the first of its kind in the church that follows the fatuous fashion of robing in Roman costume: the closely-adjoining seated figure of Elizabeth Russell, who died in 1601—"that martyr to good huswifery," as the Spectator calls her, "who died by the prick of a needle"—is remarkable as the first that departs from the usual

recumbent attitude. Strangely enough, the monument to Holles, by the famous Nicholas Stone, is a really beautiful bit of work. Three other monuments that ought on no account to be missed are located in the east aisle of the north transept, which was formerly divided into the three respective chapels of St. Andrew, St. Michael, and St. John the Evangelist. In the last of these is the monument of Sir Francis de Vere (d. 1609), which is strongly reminiscent of that of Count Engelbert II. of Nassau (d. 1504), by Thomasino Vincenz of Bologna, in the Groote Kerk at Breda, in Holland. At the bottom is the prostrate body of Sir Francis, like the familiar French "gissant"; whilst above, on a slab of marble that is carried at each corner on the shoulders of four splendidly sculptured, half-kneeling knights, are the various bits of armour of the deceased. In the farthest chapel of St. Andrew is the gorgeous erection that serves to keep alive the memory alike of Lord Norris (d. 1601) and of his six stout sons. Notwithstanding its comparatively early date, it seems to the writer that this monument represents an important link in the transition from the earlier forms of the Renaissance to classicalism pure and simple. The faces of the sons, uplifted in silent prayer, are as noble of their kind as the faces of Torrigiano's bas-reliefs on the tomb of Henry Tudor. The most remarkable of the three monuments, in the middle chapel, still remains to be mentioned. As to the merits of this,

opinions will continue to differ; John Wesley, when he visited the Abbey in 1771, found nothing to be compared with it; whilst to Mr. Bond it is "the most abominable monument in the church, that of Lady Nightingale (d. 1731) by Roubillac, with her husband protesting against his wife being stabbed by a skeleton." Possibly, to find a parallel to this weirdly dramatic group, we must cross the seas to the Campo Santo at Genoa, where a modern bronze, if I recollect rightly, represents a young girl in the misty embrace of veiled Death. The terror and protest on the husband's face are very finely rendered, though the face itself is almost ludicrously a face of the eighteenth century—different, indeed, is the aspect of calm contemplation with which the Duchess of Buckinghamshire, in Henry VII.'s Chapel, regards her husband "with considerable interest." The entrance to this aisle, I may add, is blocked by the huge monument to General Wolfe, one of the very vilest in the church, though it may almost be matched by the atrocity to Lord Howe. I

There is still one spot in the Abbey that is famous for its monuments, or, more correctly, for the dead whom the monuments commemorate. This is the Poets' Corner, at the south end of the east aisle of the south transept. The name was apparently first given it by Goldsmith—accidentally, it would seem, and as mere description—in his "Letters from a Citizen of the World." The Chinese traveller, Lien

Chi Altana, is taken round the Abbey by "a gentleman, dressed in black," who, "perceiving me to be a stranger, came up, entered into conversation, and politely offered to be my instructor and guide through the temple." After examining the striking monument of one of the many nobodies-"there are several others in the temple who, hated and shunned by the great while alive, have come here fully resolved to keep them company now they are dead "-"'There,' says the gentleman, pointing with his finger, 'that is the Poets' Corner; there you see the monuments of Shakespeare, and Milton, and Prior, and Drayton.'" Most of the monuments are merely cenotaphs—Shakespeare is at Stratford-on-Avon, and Milton at St. Giles', Cripplegate; whilst "poor Noll" himself, who has since come to join the company, and is honoured with a Latin inscription (giving a wrong date of birth) by Dr. Johnson, lies in his lonely grave amongst the flagstones to the north of the Temple Church. Only two poets of the first rank, Browning and Tennyson, are actually buried here, unless "Dan Chaucer, the first warbler," and Edmund Spenser, "the Prince of Poets in his tyme," are to be reckoned among their brotherhood. Chaucer, at any rate, has a tomb of real interest, though it was not erected till the reign of Queen Mary: previously to that he is said to have been commemorated only by "a leaden inscription hanging from a pillar." Ben Jonson, though he has

a tablet in the Poets' Corner, is actually interred in the north aisle of the nave—it is said like the Claphams and Mauleverers in Bolton Priory—

"A griesely sight,
A vault where the bodies are buried upright"—

in a standing position. The story is often told how a passing stranger paid eighteenpence to have "O Rare Ben Jonson" cut on the gravestone. Campbell is commemorated by a blatant pedestal and statue, which would look less out of place among the statesmen in the north transept opposite. Dickens is actually buried here, though it is said that he wished to lie at Rochester. Byron, of course, is interred at Hucknall Torkard: it does not appear from the account in Moore's "Life" that any formal application was ever made to bury him in the Abbey, but a refusal was apparently adumbrated. On the whole it is difficult, however great may be our feeling for poetry and poets, to rake up much enthusiasm in this spot that looks like a museum. Would not Tennyson be better laid at Haslemere,

"beneath the clover sod,
That takes the sunshine and the rains,
Or where the kneeling hamlet drains
The chalice of the grapes of God,"

than jostled here by the graves of so many mediocrities? Browning, perhaps, is in different plight; his genius was essentially social; and quite conceiv-

This dar Kuffas Co

ably his comprehensive human sympathy would not have resented fellowship with this strange medley who burnt incense to the Muse. Here again, just as in the chapels of the Confessor and of Henry VII., Death is presented in a special guise. Not a few of these poets, as Mr. Loftie points out—Chaucer, Spenser, Ben Jonson, Butler, Dryden—are reported to have died "in great poverty":

"The poet's fate is here in emblem shown:
He asked for bread, and he received a stone."

One would not wish to translate Matthew Arnold hither from his repose by the Thames at Laleham, nor Wordsworth from the sound of "high-born Rotha" that murmurs past Grasmere churchyard.

IV.

WE have left ourselves all too little space to speak of Westminster in yet a fourth aspect—as a great Benedictine monastery, still exhibiting extensive remains. This is an aspect, no doubt, that appeals less to the general public than to the student of monastic design. The Cloisters and Chapter-House, it is true, are visited by everybody, and rightly; but few, perhaps, seek to trace out the site of the Infirmary, or of the "Frater" of the monks, or of the

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Abbot's House; and fewer still seek to relate these to one another, or to assign them to their proper place in the general Benedictine plan. The Cloisters, though their window tracery (some of it very unusual) has been extensively restored, have parts that are greatly decayed: it is not difficult to realize their genuine antiquity as we pace their silent and deserted aisles. From their South walk, moreover, there is a magnificent view of the south side of the nave, and into the angle between the nave and south transept: such a complicated mass of pinnacles and flying buttresses—a huge scaffolding in stone—it would hardly be possible to rival even in France. The Chapter-House, entered from the east alley, is in one respect unique, since it is built above a crypt that was intended for a national treasure-house. It is also unusual among Benedictine chapter-houses for its octagonal plan, though this is found commonly enough in the chapter-houses of secular canons (such as Lincoln, Salisbury, Howden, and York), and also at the Augustinian Priory of Bolton, in Yorkshire. Most other English Benedictine houses, and (so far as the writer knows) all houses of any kind on the Continent-whether of monks or of regular, or secular, canons - have chapter-houses that are rectangular in plan. This at Westminster is a lovely conception of the thirteenth century, and vaulted from a single central pillar. Perhaps not its least interest is due to the fact that it served for

centuries as the usual meeting-place of the House of Commons.

The Abbot's House, which for a few short years was the episcopal palace of the short-lived See of Westminster, is now fitly enough the Deanery. Other monastic buildings, including the old Dorter, or Dormitory, are now portions of Westminster School. It would be pleasant to linger among these ancient retreats, which have scarcely suffered since their foundation save by the expulsion of the monks, or to visit the Jerusalem Chamber (to which, however, there is no general access), with its remnants of ancient glass, and of the thirteenth-century reredos that was formerly behind the High Altar in the church. This was the scene of the sudden and tragic death of Henry IV., in 1413. He had been seized with sickness in the church, when praying before the shrine of the Confessor, and "they bare him into a chamber that was nexte at hand, belonging to the Abbot of Westminster, where they laid him on a pallet before the fier, and used all remedyes to revive him: at length, hee recovered hys speeche, and understanding and perceiving himselfe in a strange place which he knew not, hee willed to know if the chamber had any particular name, whereunto aunswere was made, that it was called 'Jerusalem.' Then saide the King, laudes be gyven to the father of heaven, for now I knowe that I shall dye heere in thys chamber, according to the prophecie of me

declared, that I shoulde depart this life in Jerusalem." This incident is made use of by Shakespeare in his picture of the King's death (Part II. iv. 4):

"But, bear me to that chamber; there I'll lie; In that Jerusalem shall Harry die"—

though he does not altogether adhere to the accounts that are given either by Fabyan or Holinshed. Henry, though he thus actually died within the precincts of Westminster, was one of the very few of our earlier Kings who was buried away from the Abbey. This was at Canterbury, in accordance with his will; though, according to a Yorkist story, his body had been cast into the Thames, as a kind of Jonah, between Barking and Gravesend. The tale was disproved by opening his tomb in 1832. His effigy, on the north side of the Trinity Chapel, is pronounced by some authorities "the most splendid of our regal series." This last honour then belongs to Canterbury Cathedral, and not to Westminster Abbey.

There is still one secluded spot in the precincts of the Abbey that should not be overlooked. This is the so-called Little Cloister, which really represents the old Infirmary, or Farmery, Cloister—a building devoted in medieval monasteries, not merely to the care of the actually sick, but used also as the permanent abode of aged monks (where they could enjoy certain privileges and comforts), and as the temporary residence of those who were suffering from the annual phlebotomy. The Cloister arcades are post-Gothic reconstruction, but the inner walls of the walks are medieval. This quiet spot, with its fountain in the middle, is strangely suggestive of unruffled peace in the heart of the restless town—were it not for the great Victoria Tower of the Houses of Parliament, which towers in unspeakable majesty above the narrow enclosure, one might almost forget that this is London!

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